

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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R 041410Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7911

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

RUQMRAXAMEMBASSY JIDDA 205

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

US MISSION USUN NEW YORK 1786

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 4558

BEIRUT PASS TO DAMASCUS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN, XF

SUBJECT: INDIA, EGYPT AND THE GENEVA CONFERENCE

REF: CAIRO 3410 AND 3364

SUMMARY: INDIA ANNOUNCED APRIL 3 THAT FOREIGN MINISTER CHAVAN WILL VISIT EGYPT "IN THE NEAR FUTURE ON MUTUALLY CONVENIENT DATES." WORKING LEVEL AT FOREIGN MINISTRY KNOWS OF NO SPECIFIC EGYPTIAN OVERTURES TO INDIA TO PARTICIPATE IN GENEVA CONFERENCE. IT NOTES, HOWEVER, THAT RUMANIANS HAVE PUSHED FOR SOME TIME IDEA OF BROADENING GENEVA CONFERENCE. INDIA HAS HELD BACK PENDING VIEWS OF EGYPT AND SYRIA. IF THEY WISH INDIA TO ATTEND IT WOULD OF COURSE
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WELCOME OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE INDIAN CREDENTIALS WITH ARABS,

TO BECOME INVOLVED AGAIN IN PROBLEMS OF AN AREA OF IMPORTANCE TO INDIA, AND PERHAPS TO CONTRIBUTE IN SMALL WAY TO RESOLUTION OF THOSE PROBLEMS. END SUMMARY.

1. CHAVAN'S VISIT: BRIEF ANNOUNCEMENT OF FOREIGN MINISTER CHAVAN'S ACCEPTANCE OF FAHMY'S INVITATION SAID IT WOULD BE "A GOODWILL VISIT TO A FRIENDLY NONALIGNED COUNTRY FOR FURTHER CONSOLIDATING THE TRADITIONALLY CLOSE AND COOPERATIVE RELATIONS EXISTING BETWEEN IT AND INDIA." ACCORDING TO WORKING LEVEL OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY VISIT MAY OCCUR IN LATE MAY OR IN JUNE. (EGYPT HAS PROPOSED LATE MAY, BUT THERE MAY BE SCHEDULING PROBLEMS FOR CHAVAN.) THE LAST SIMILAR EXCHANGE WAS TWO YEARS AGO, WHEN THE EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER VISITED DELHI. THE INDIANS ASSUME THAT THERE WILL BE EXTENSIVE DISCUSSION OF BI-LATERAL RELATIONS (E.G., INDIAN FAILURE TO BUY AS MUCH EGYPTIAN COTTON RECENTLY AS BEFORE) AS WILL AS ARAB-ISRAEL AND NONALIGNED ISSUES.

2. GENEVA CONFERENCE: THE DIRECTOR OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S WEST ASIA DIVISION, AKBAR HALEELIN KNEW OF NO SPECIFIC EGYPTIAN MESSAGE TO INDIA ABOUT PARTICIPATING IN THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. HE SAID THAT ANY MENTION WOULD HAVE BEEN AT MOST A GENERAL COMMENT BY THE EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR IN DELIVERING FAHMY'S INVITATION, BUT HE WAS NOT PRESENT AND COULD NOT CONFIRM IT. WHILE THE INVITATION TO CHAVAN TO VISIT CAIRO WAS UNDERSTANDABLE AS AN EFFORT BY EGYPT TO REBUILD ITS FENCES WITH THE NONALIGNED FOLLOWING A PERIOD OF HEAVY INVOLVEMENT WITH DR. KISSINGER'S EFFORTS, PARTICIPATION BY ADDITIONAL COUNTRIES IN THE GENEVA CONFERENCE MIGHT CHANGE ITS CHARACTER FROM A COMPARATIVELY SMALL GROUP TO A LARGER, MORE PROPAGANDISTIC OPERATION. IN ANY CASE, KHALEELI FORSAW FURTHER INDIRECT ISRAEL-EGYPT NEGOTIATIONS BEFORE CONVENING OF ANY GENEVA CONFERENCE.

3. INDIA HAD WATCHED ROMANIAN EFFORTS TO BROADEN THE GENEVA CONFERENCE BUT HAD WAITED FOR WORD FROM EGYPT AND SYRIA WHETHER IT WAS WANTED, KHALEELI OBSERVED. INDIA AT A MINIMUM WOULD REFURBISH ITS CREDENTIALS WITH THE ARABS (AND WITH INDIAN MUSLIMS) BY PARTICIPATING. IT HAD TAKEN LITTLE ROLE IN THE

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ISSUE SINCE 1967. WHILE PRO-ARAB, IT WAS NOT ANTI-ISRAEL AND MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP FIND AREAS OF COMPROMISE. IT MIGHT ALSO HELP SERVE AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN THE SOVIETS AND THE EGYPTIANS AT SUCH A CONFERENCE, HE THOUGHT.
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